

PARKS & RECREATION

A Master Plan for Tomorrow

GOAL

Provide inclusive facilities, in conjunction with schools and private organizations that present a variety of recreational amenities including passive and active programs for residents of all ages.

BACKGROUND

Description

Parks and recreational programs are considered essential community features in the Town of Blacksburg. These places and programs enhance the social, physical, and psychological well being of citizens by providing them with enjoyable activities and settings in which to spend their leisure time. Parks aid in maintaining the integrity of watersheds and protecting water quality in streams and underground aquifers. Natural wildlife habitats are also preserved. The economic benefits from preserving these open spaces and offering recreational opportunities include increases in the value of surrounding properties and an enhanced quality of life in Blacksburg.

Public Facilities

Blacksburg – Recreational opportunities in Blacksburg are available to citizens of all ages on a year-round basis. The park system is composed of over 360 acres including 109 acres outside the town limits. There are many different facilities within the park network including one community park, five neighborhood parks, 20 miles of public and private trails, nine community-wide facilities, and 31 acres of privately dedicated open space.

Activities and facilities available include golf, swimming, tennis, volleyball, picnicking, playgrounds, nature trails, bike trails, athletic fields, and other outdoor opportunities. Indoor activities are centered at the Blacksburg Community Center and Aquatics Center in the Municipal Park. Facility use has remained high at 230,676 people during fiscal year 1999-2000. The Community Center served 121,815 users while the Aquatic Center had a total use of 52,761. Kipps Elementary School had 27,175 people use the gym, and 28,925 people used The Hill Municipal Golf Course.

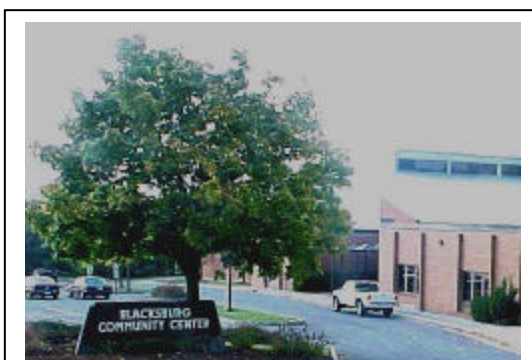


Figure PR-1, Blacksburg Community Center

Virginia Tech – Virginia Tech also has numerous recreational facilities that are technically public facilities, but are generally available only to students, faculty,

and staff directly associated with the university. These amenities contribute to the high quality of life in the town but do not directly add to the town's public recreation system. If an agreement could be reached between the town and university for the general use of some recreational amenities such as the tennis courts and select athletic fields, this would directly add to the town's public recreation system. Otherwise, these university amenities contribute to the community's overall recreation system in much the same way as private recreational facilities.

Private Facilities

A community's private recreational facilities are important for providing additional recreation amenities in the area. Most private facilities are located in multi-family complexes or more affluent neighborhoods. Blacksburg has relatively high family incomes for the region as well as an abundance of multi-family housing, both of which often provide additional recreational opportunities. The town has required multi-unit residential complexes to provide a minimum of open and recreational space for almost two decades. Subdivisions are also required to dedicate at least ten percent of their development as private recreation space. It is important that these private facilities supplement, not substitute for, public recreation facilities.

There are two private swim clubs in Town and sixteen hot tubs or pools that are associated with specific multi-unit complexes. In addition there are numerous basketball, tennis, and volleyball courts throughout town that are maintained by private Home Owners Associations or rental agencies. Private playgrounds and trails are also located throughout Town. The private trails maintained by the Hethwood and Woodbine neighborhoods are treated as public amenities and both associations have indicated a willingness to work with the town on formal public access and maintenance along portions of these private systems.

Town Recreational Programs

The Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of programs for citizens of all ages, and publishes program information in a quarterly seasonal brochure. Programs are provided in many categories including tots, youth, adult, outdoor, and aquatic. Programs for tots focus on improving coordination, creative expression, self-confidence, and social interaction. Youth

programs include dance, karate, art, first aid, as well as organized sports such as baseball, football, basketball, wrestling and track. A variety of youth summer camps are also offered. Adult athletic programs include softball, basketball and volleyball. Seniors can participate in programs such as aerobics and exercise,



Figure PR-2, Aquatic Center

computer classes, bridge, walking club, golf, tennis, arts and crafts, and trips to various places of interest. The outdoor program provides opportunities for rock climbing, stargazing, skiing, hikes and walks, caving, bird watching, kayaking and canoeing, and cycling trips. The Aquatic Center provides swim lessons, water aerobics, lifeguard and water safety training, and scuba training.

Special events are offered each year as well. These events include the Fourth of July celebration, a Halloween carnival, an Easter Egg Hunt, and a Holiday parade. An active community band that includes an array of citizens plays at various events throughout the year. Other activities and programs are offered year-round.

Public Input

The Recreation Advisory Board is a citizen committee that helps guide development of recreational programs and facilities. Planning for recreational facilities began in the spring of 1972. Since then four plans have been completed with the first in 1975. The Parks and Recreation Department continues to serve the citizens by constantly providing new and innovative programs as well as high quality facilities and parks.

Opportunities

- ◆ The town has strong community support for recreational facilities and programs.
- ◆ A variety of programs and facilities are available for public use.
- ◆ Joint use of facilities with Montgomery County including schools, parks, and other facilities is increasingly common.
- ◆ The town's plan for connectivity between schools and parks through a comprehensive greenway system that provides pedestrian linkages for alternative transportation, recreation, and educational uses.
- ◆ Virginia Tech provides recreational facilities for its students, faculty, and staff, but these opportunities are not available to the general public.

Challenges

- ◆ The limited amount of open space remaining and even more limited public funding restricts the town's ability to purchase land.
- ◆ Meeting an increased community demand for year-round indoor recreational facilities.
- ◆ Approximately 55 percent of the town population is in the "active" 15-24 age group compared to about 10 percent of the population in comparable non-university towns.
- ◆ Providing active and passive recreational programs for all ages, including evening and weekend activities for the area's youth (ages 16-20).

What is Changing

A Park Master Plan for the entire parks and recreation system, including a recreational needs assessment and programming recommendations, is planned for 2002 or 2003. The master plan will use the existing park classification system to make specific facility and program recommendations for the community, and to guide the acquisition and development of all future park facilities. The park classification system, developed by professional park planners, Town recreation staff and citizen input, includes recommended facility standards based on identified Town recreational needs.

The community is in need of more recreational facilities such as athletic fields for soccer, and an indoor facility for sports, shows and exhibits. The new Blacksburg Middle School allows community use of the facility after school hours. Portions of the facility are programmed for recreational use all day including indoor gymnasium space and designated athletic fields and trails. In addition to access to the school, the Heritage Park & Natural Area will satisfy some of the town's remaining recreational needs including a nature center that includes indoor exhibits.

As Virginia Tech's enrollment grows, the expanding population will create more demand for existing park areas and recreational facilities. Much of this population is served by facilities on the Virginia Tech campus, but many students still use Town facilities and programs. An increase in graduate enrollment will have the greatest effect on the town's recreational programs and facilities, since these students often have spouses and families.

Young adults, ages 16-20, have indicated a need for evening and weekend activities separate from those geared towards Virginia Tech students. Requested activities and amenities include dancing, billiards, disc jockeys, live music, video games, televised sporting events, and a concessions/drink shop. Such teen activities, both publicly and privately sponsored, would provide Blacksburg's youth with a variety of opportunities.

Blacksburg is encouraging the location of a professional minor league baseball team into Town. Virginia Tech's English Field is an ideal location for this purpose. The town prefers an Appalachian League Rookie team be recruited to play within the region which includes teams from Pulaski, Danville, Martinsville, Bristol, Princeton, and Bluefield.

Citizen input through the Recreation Advisory Board is critical for maintaining a responsive parks system. The Recreation Advisory Board is appointed by Town Council to reflect the recreational needs of its citizens. Through this method of citizen involvement, the board can make thoughtful decisions in the best interest of the entire community.

FACILITY STANDARDS

The following facility standards are guidelines that have been derived after consultation with parks and recreation experts, local staff, citizens, National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines, the *1996 Virginia Outdoors Plan*, and with numerous communities in both Virginia and North Carolina that possess similar population demographics and interests. Both the NRPA and the Virginia guidelines emphasize the importance of using standards that reflect the unique nature of local parks, as well as the community's recreational needs.

Four park classifications identify the type of recreation facilities within Town: Regional Park, Community Park, Neighborhood Park, and Special Use Facilities. These four classifications are based upon minimum standards for area and service radii, and include individual activity recommendations. A fifth type of park is recommended: the District Park, which is where more active recreational activities can take place. These five park classifications provide a minimum standard of 16 acres per 1,000 citizens of park land or about 750 total acres with a Town population of 47,000. The town currently owns 394 acres of park land, not including greenways and the golf course.

All parks should be planned, designed, and constructed in a sensitive manner to preserve the natural environment and to maximize the natural features of the land. This approach does not preclude the development of parking lots, rooftops, impervious trails, fencing, lights, and other amenities commonly provided in parks, but it does encourage environmentally responsible planning in accordance with best available technologies and planning practices.

Parks should be balanced for both active and passive recreational activities. To accomplish this, parks should include appropriate buffers around property boundaries and as needed between centers of activity within the park. A good design standard for town park development maintains that a park should be no more than 50 percent developed with 100-foot minimum vegetative buffers along a park's boundary. For example, district parks are usually flatter properties, such as open fields or former farm fields, with buffers concentrated heavily on property borders and between nodes of activity. Trails or other passive amenities are commonly found within buffer areas. The inclusion of these features depends on the park activities, the orientation of adjacent structures such as residential housing, and other specific details.

Regional Park

Regional parks typically provide a wide variety of activities for the greater community, and also present opportunities for non-traditional recreation. These parks are often funded, developed, or operated as multi-jurisdictional facilities. Nature and community centers, festival grounds, extensive trail systems, and water activities are features that can typically be found in regional parks. To accommodate their unique amenities, regional parks span a minimum of 100 acres and have a service radius of approximately 25 miles. Additionally, the typical acreage/population ratio for regional parks is four to five acres per 1,000 persons.

Both heavily oriented towards nature activities, the Heritage Park & Natural Area (169 acres) and Ellett Valley Park (109 acres) are regional parks due to their attraction of specific users from well beyond the town's boundaries. Features proposed for the Heritage Park & Natural Area include a lake, wetlands enhancement and preservation, a nature center, several miles of paved and unpaved trails, a national forest connection, a small amphitheater, and other family-oriented recreational amenities. The Ellett Valley Park is almost entirely wooded and will continue to be used exclusively for passive recreation, containing a small parking lot to serve several miles of trail.



Figure PR-3, Heritage Park

District Park

District parks serve a wide variety of community interests and include intensively developed areas for active recreation, as well as supporting infrastructure. Typical active recreational amenities include playgrounds; athletic fields for soccer, baseball/softball, and for multi-use; tennis and volleyball courts; and trails. Typical infrastructure may include restrooms, concession stands, benches, picnic areas, shelters, and parking areas. Access to district parks should be along or near a major road, and access should be multi-modal in nature. District parks are a minimum of 50 acres in size and have a service radius of approximately five miles. Blacksburg does not have a district park but, based on population projections for 2010 and on a typical acreage/population ratio at four acres per 1,000 persons for district parks, needs one with approximately 180 acres. Current park acreage including Kipps Park, Kipps Elementary School and the Blacksburg Middle School totals just over 70 acres.

Community Park

Community parks serve several neighborhoods within a community. They typically provide active recreation facilities for neighborhoods, but otherwise they act as oversized neighborhood parks. Typical recreational amenities found in community parks are similar to those provided in district parks; however, differences include varying scales, more traditional neighborhood park amenities like horseshoes, basketball courts, recreation centers, and similar amenities unique to the community. Community parks are usually a minimum of 20 acres in size



*Figure PR-4, Municipal Park
Hand-in-Hand Playground*

and have a service radius of approximately one-mile. Access should be along, or near, a major road that is multi-modal in nature. A typical acreage/population ratio for community parks is three to four acres per 1,000 persons. For the Town of Blacksburg this ratio translates into 125 – 175 acres of park land, including the Municipal Park. The only community park in Town, the Municipal Park is Blacksburg's main recreational facility, and serves as an undersized district park. The 35-acre facility includes a lighted ball field, a multi-use field, two playgrounds, five shelters, eight tennis courts, a roller hockey court, a skate park, an aquatic center, a community center and the Parks and Recreation administrative offices.

Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood parks are located within walking distance of adjacent neighborhood(s) and serve the area's specific recreational interests. A neighborhood park usually does not provide parking or restrooms, but depending on service level demand, a park may offer such facilities. Typical neighborhood park amenities include playgrounds, shelters, trails, and multipurpose fields. School parks may also be considered functional neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks span a minimum of five acres and have a service radius of one-half mile.



Figure PR-5, Nellie's Cave Park

A typical acreage/population ratio for neighborhood parks is three acres per 1,000 persons. Tom's Creek and Nellie's Cave Park are both neighborhood parks that function as community parks and include facilities for athletics.

Special Use Facilities

The special use facilities park category includes recreation centers, aquatic centers, nature centers, outdoor swimming pools, school parks, mini-parks, golf courses, urban spaces, historic sites, and greenways.

Recreation centers are created to provide a variety of activities to serve the needs of the entire community. They are typically located within district or community parks and can include gymnasiums, exercise rooms, arts and crafts rooms, community rooms, kitchens, stages, restrooms/lockers/showers, and other community specific amenities. A recreation center may serve the needs of the entire town depending on its size relative to the size of the surrounding community. A 13,000-15,000 square foot facility typically has a three-mile service radius and serves approximately 20,000 people.

Aquatic centers are unique amenities that may serve as competition facilities or may provide general recreational use depending on the needs of the community. Blacksburg's natatorium includes a 25-yard swimming pool with zero depth entry, men and women's locker rooms with saunas, a unisex restroom with shower, and a hot tub. The pool is used for local competitions, general recreation

and instruction, and therapeutics. Future phases are planned that may contain a weight room, an aerobics room, a child day care center, and additional support space.

Nature centers are also unique facilities that serve to educate the general public on a wide variety of environmental and wildlife issues, usually emphasizing a few key topics. Blacksburg's nature center is oriented towards native flora and fauna species, and features live wildlife and botanical displays. The center plans to relocate from the historic Price House in Downtown to the Heritage Park & Natural Area.

Outdoor swimming pools in this area are used for leisure and should be designed for general water activities and not for structured swimming. Leisure pools can contain water slides, sitting areas, wave activity, waterfalls, play equipment, and other similar amenities. Blacksburg's outdoor pool was closed in 1999 and a new leisure pool is in the planning stages. The outdoor pool may be relocated from The Hill Golf Course to the Municipal Park adjacent to the aquatic center, or another suitable location. The new facility will have zero depth entry and may contain many of the characteristics listed above.

School parks are County school properties that are used by the community as public recreation facilities. The shared use of the Blacksburg Middle School and Kipps Elementary School gymnasiums and grounds in conjunction with Kipp's Park is an excellent example of joint use of public facilities. Blacksburg Middle and High Schools supplement the town's recreational facilities and are heavily used by the community. The general public should also use new schools located within Town after school hours as a community resource. Elementary schools have appropriate levels of athletic fields, play equipment, and other park-like amenities to serve as neighborhood parks. Blacksburg utilizes all of its elementary school sites as neighborhood parks and those facilities are programmed with recreational activities by the town each summer and after school hours.

Mini-parks contain playgrounds or tot lots, and are similar in nature to neighborhood parks but offer fewer amenities due to their small size. These lots may range in size from one-quarter acre up to five acres and are located within one-half mile of their major users. Playgrounds have a facility standard of one unit per 1,000 persons. No support amenities such as parking or restrooms are provided, although it is not unusual to find water fountains and safety lights in mini-parks. In addition, a play unit, benches, and possibly a picnic shelter are typically found at these facilities. Mini-parks are primarily intended for children with adult supervision.

Golf courses are classified as Regulation Length, Executive Length, and Par-Three, and each type has its own standards. Regulation length courses are full-sized at over 7,200 total yards; they have 18 holes and a par rating of 66 or higher. Executive length courses are measured between 4,000-5,200 total yards with 18 holes and have par ratings between 58-66. Par-three courses are sized less than 4,000 yards and have over 18 holes with a par rating of 54. Golf courses typically

serve the entire metropolitan area with a standard of one 18-hole course per 50,000 persons with a minimum size of 150 acres. Blacksburg has one nine-hole course (2,731 yards, par 35), Virginia Tech has a regulation length course (6,448 yards, par 70), and the area is also served by the Blacksburg Country Club, which has a regulation length course (6,750 yards, par 72). These golf courses adequately serve the community; however, the future status of the Virginia Tech course is unknown and not directly addressed in their master plan. Additionally, the town's course is geographically limited to nine holes and the country club course is private, and therefore not available to the entire community.



Figure PR-6, Golf Course

Urban spaces are areas of open space, including existing parks, which are underutilized or unknown that contribute to the integrity and quality of the urban environment. Urban parks can be created or enhanced townwide through neighborhood planning, through a Recreation Advisory Board recommendation, or by citizen demand. Urban parks are closely related to neighborhood parks and can be developed as funding permits. Bicentennial Square (Marcia's Park next to the police station) is one such space. This entryway into downtown is the bridge between the Huckleberry and Bicentennial Trails and was redeveloped and landscaped in 1998 as part of the town's Bicentennial celebration.



Figure PR-7, Bicentennial Square

Historic sites are often used for recreation and economic development, and are vitally important to the cultural identity of a community. Blacksburg's Price House (c.1840), for example, functions as the current nature center. In addition, the Thomas Connor House, the Five Chimneys House, and the Armory lie along the Bicentennial Trail and act as a gateway into the downtown. These historic amenities are critical to the enhancement of our park facilities and community at large, and are detailed specifically in the *Historic Preservation* chapter.

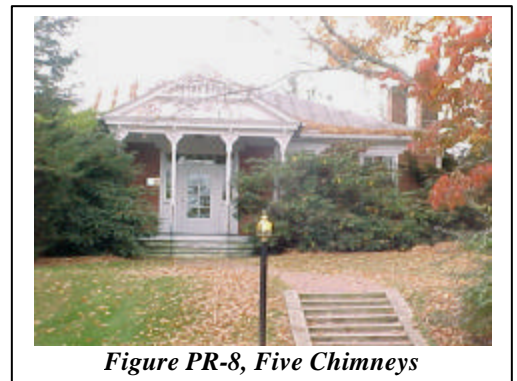


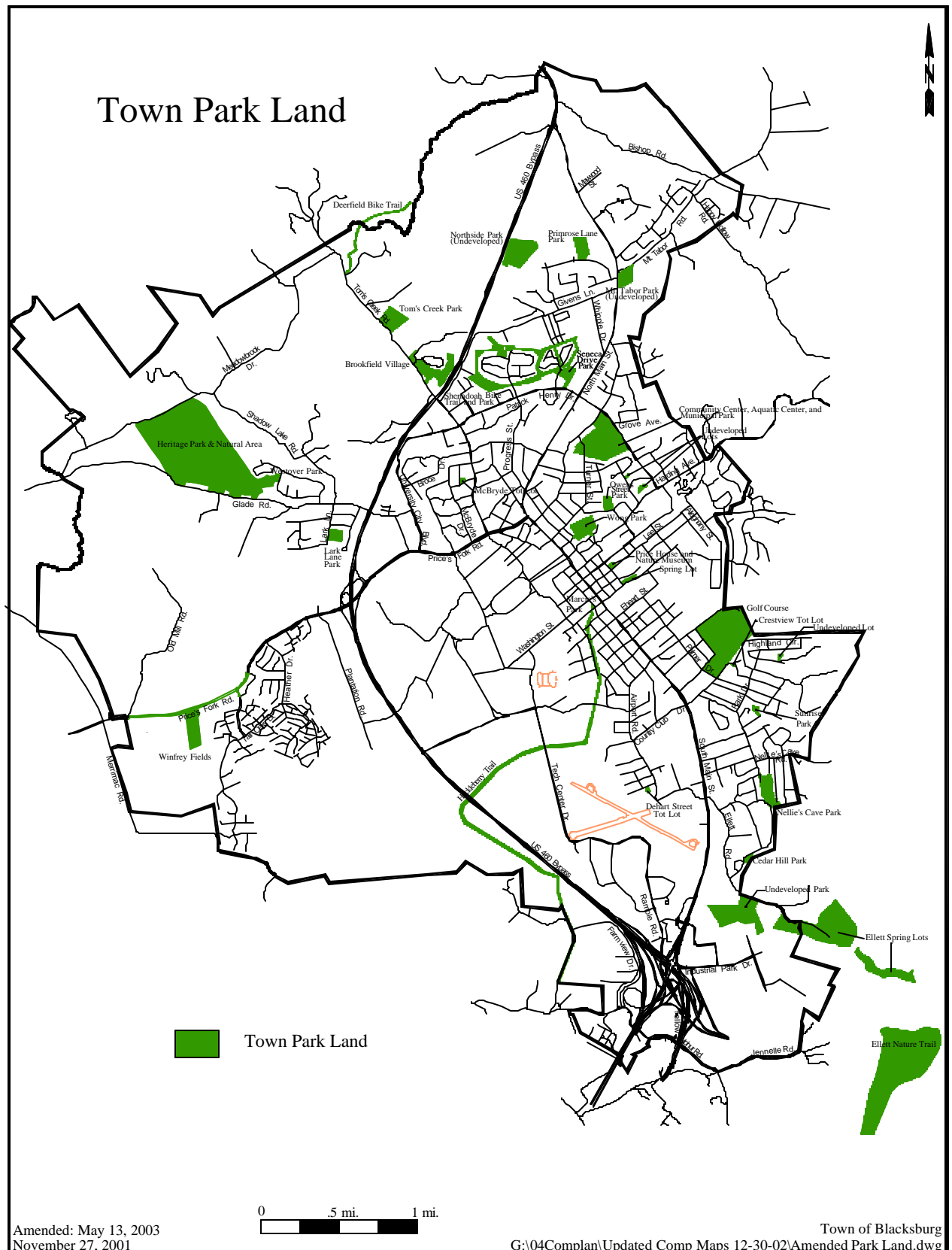
Figure PR-8, Five Chimneys

Greenways are an essential element for establishing an integrated park system. They form linear parks and often contain bikeways and other trails that connect parks, historic landmarks, schools, neighborhoods, and businesses. Greenways also provide recreational opportunities, alternative transportation, as well as stormwater management. This topic is discussed at length in the *Greenways* chapter.

Town Park Land

Park	Classification	Acreage
Heritage Park & Natural Area (undeveloped)	Regional	169.8
Cedar Hill	Mini-park	1.3
Crestview	Mini-park	0.2
Deerfield	Mini-park	2.6
DeHart	Mini-park	0.4
Ellett Valley (contains trails only)	Regional	109
Industrial Park properties (undeveloped)	Community	25.5
Lark Lane	Mini-park	3.1
Kipp's	Neighborhood	11.1
Bicentennial [Marcia's]	Mini-park	0.5
McBryde	Mini-park	0.4
Mt. Tabor (undeveloped)	Neighborhood	5.38
Municipal	Community	34.4
Nellie's Cave	Neighborhood	9.3
Northside (undeveloped)	Neighborhood	16.2
Owens	Mini-park	2.7
Primrose	Neighborhood	5.6
Seneca Drive	Neighborhood	4.1 (7.74)
Shenandoah	Neighborhood	5
Sunrise	Mini-park	0.8
Tom's Creek	Neighborhood	9.3
Vacant lots (undeveloped)	Mini-park	1
Westover	Neighborhood	4.8
Wong (undeveloped)	Neighborhood	9.24
Mini-park Subtotal		13
Neighborhood Park Subtotal		80
Community Park Subtotal		34.4
District Park Subtotal		0
Regional Park Subtotal		278.8
Total Park Acreage		406.2
Table does not include Special Use Facilities, but does list undeveloped properties.		

Figure PR-9, Town Park Land



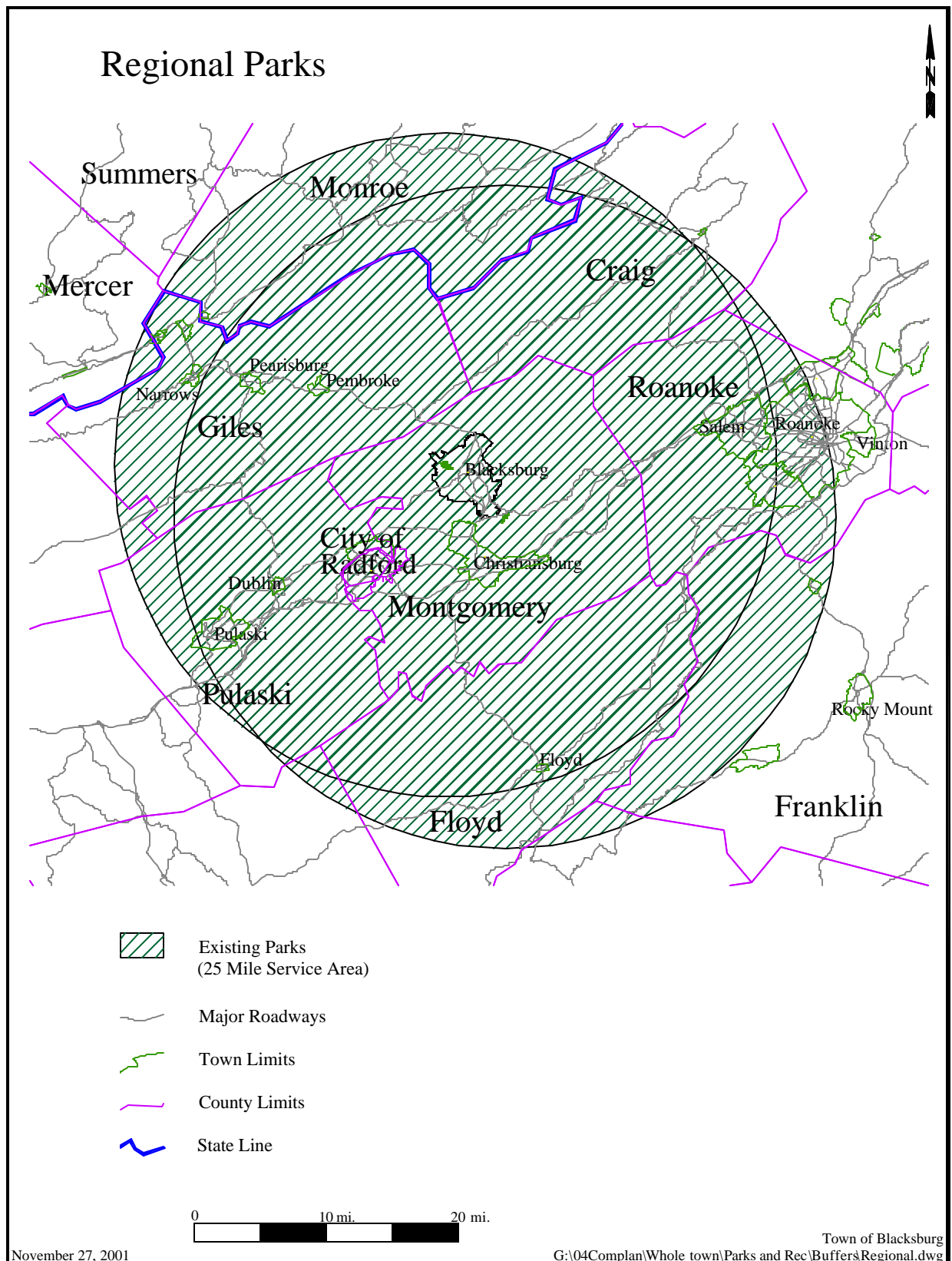


Figure PR-11, Regional Parks

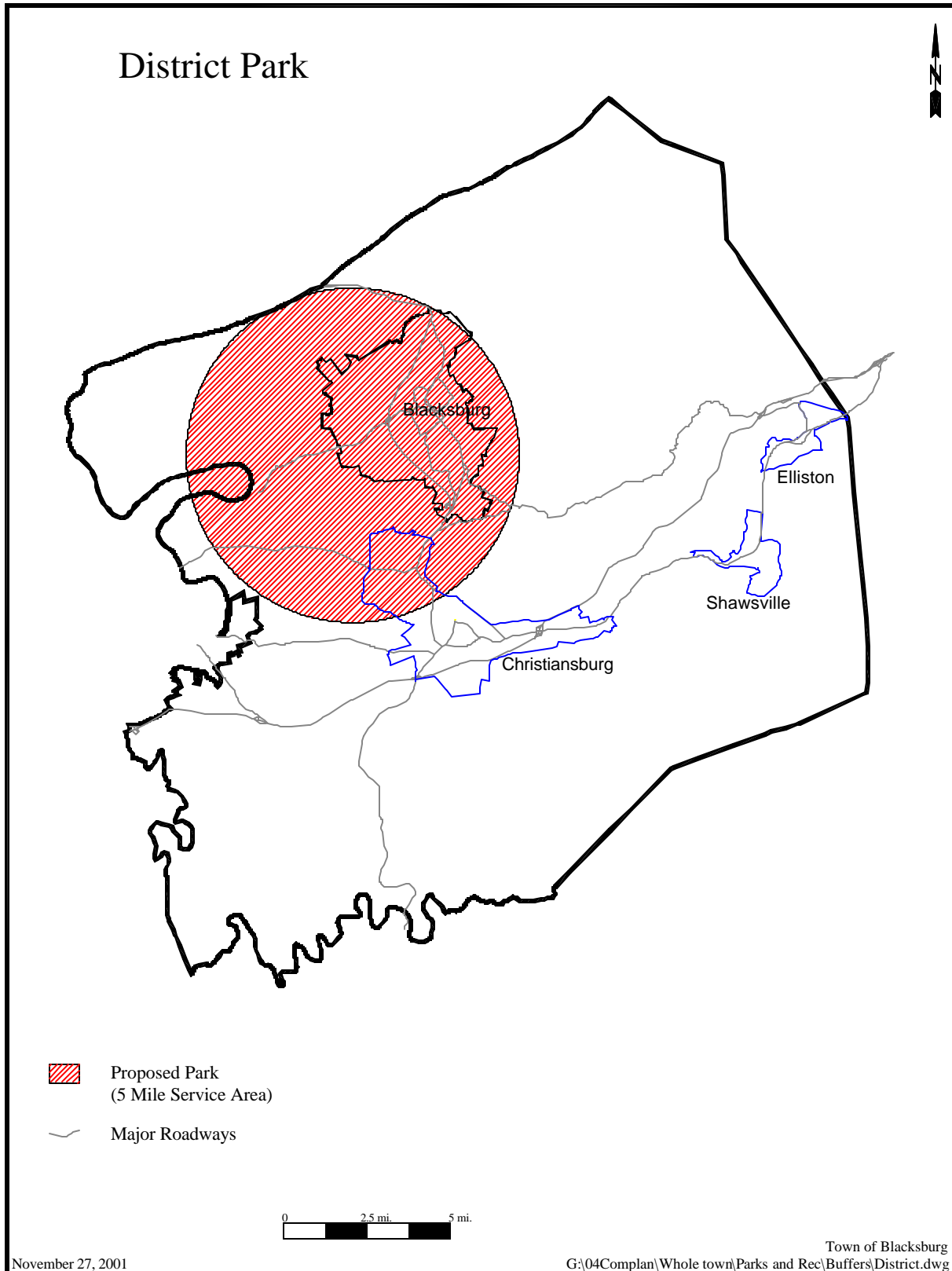


Figure PR-12, Proposed District Park

Community Parks

Community Parks

Legend:

- Proposed Parks (1 Mile Service Area)
- Existing Parks (1 Mile Service Area)
- Virginia Tech Property
- Park Properties

Scale: 0 .5 mi. 1 mi.

Amended: May 13, 2003
November 27, 2001

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Figure PR-13, Community Parks

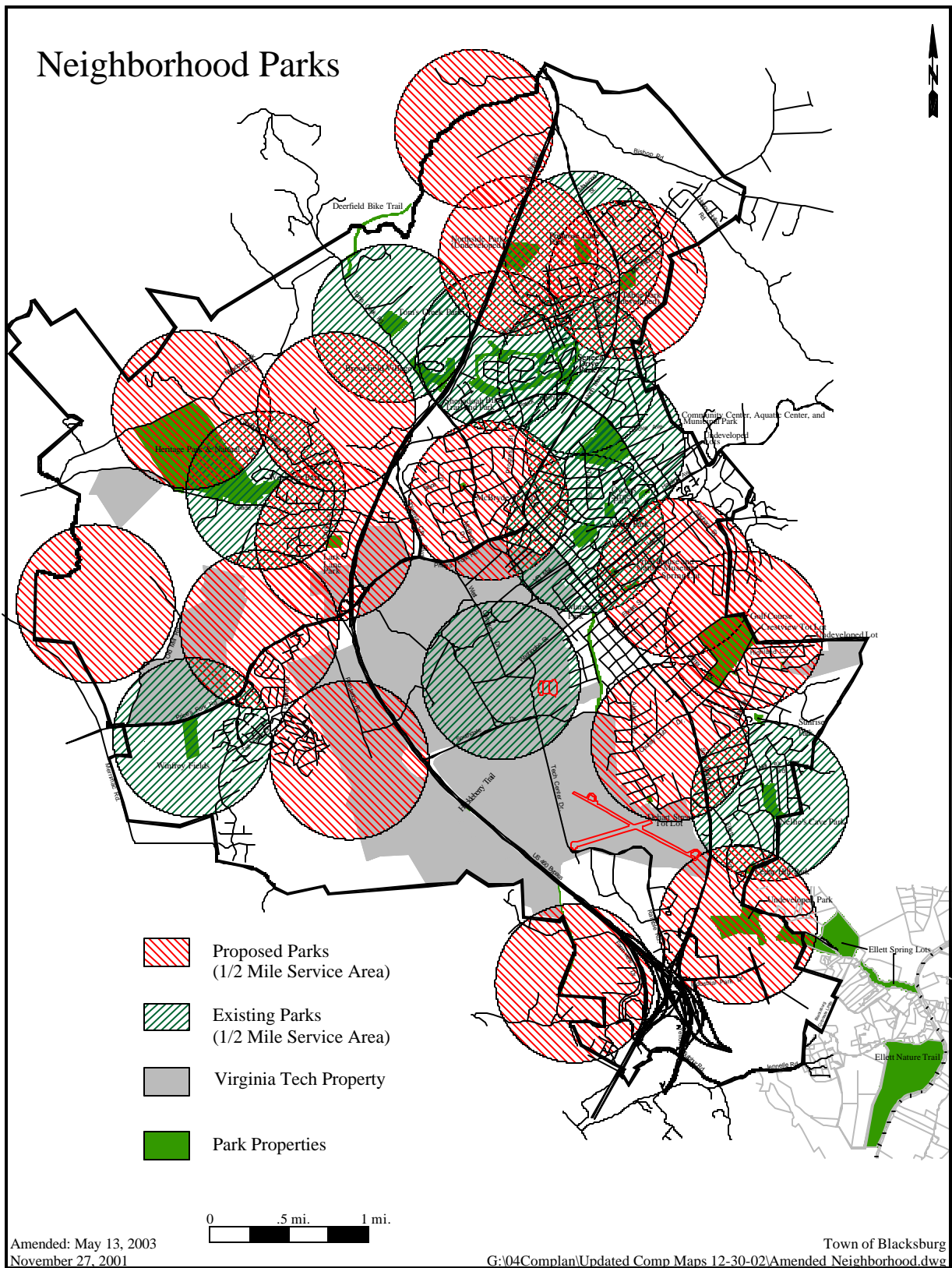


Figure PR-14, Neighborhood Parks

Park Facility Standards

Facility Type	National NRPA	North Carolina NCDEHNR	Virginia Outdoors Plan	Blacksburg Public Park Standards	Existing Public*** Facilities	Virginia Tech 2000 pop: 25,783	Projected 2000 Facility Needs** Est. pop: 39,573	Projected 2010 Facility Needs** Est. pop: 46,750
Regional	NA	20 ac/1000	4 ac/1000	5 ac/1000	279 acres	NA	198 acres	234 acres
District	5 - 10 ac/1000	10 ac/1000	4 ac/1000	4 ac/1000	0 acres	NA	158 acres	187 acres
Community Park	5 - 8 ac/1000	10 ac/1000	3 ac/1000	4 ac/1000	34 acres	NA	158 acres	187 acres
Neighborhood Park	1 - 2 ac/1000	2 ac/1000	3 ac/1000	3 ac/1000	80 acres	NA	119 acres	140 acres
Mini-Park	0.25 - 0.5 ac/1000	NA	NA	0.5 ac/1000	13 acres	NA	20 acres	23 acres
Playgrounds	NA	1/1000	NA	1/1000	20	NA	40	47
Tennis courts	1/2000	1/2000	1/2000	1/2000	7	22	20	23
Soccer fields	1/10000	1/10000	1/5000	1/2000	10	3	20	23
Baseball fields	1/12000	1/5000	1/6000	1/5000	4	0	8	9
Softball fields	1/5000	1/5000	1/3000	1/5000	3	4	8	9
Football fields	1/10000	1/10000	1/10000	1/10000	0	0	4	5
Volleyball courts	1/5000	1/5000	1/5000	1/5000	3	8	8	9
Community center	NA	NA	1/5k-1/80k	1/20000	1	2	2	2
Picnic shelters	NA	1/3000	10/1000*	1/2000	6	0	20	23
Swimming pool	1/20000	1/20000	1/10k-1/20k	1/20000	1	2	2	2
Trails (miles/1000)	1/region	1/1000	NA	1/1000	13.5	6.5	40	47
Basketball courts	1/5000	1/5000	1/5000	1/5000	5	9	8	9

* Virginia standard is for individual picnic tables per thousand people

** Expressed as an overall total; **not** in addition to prior years

*** Private recreational facilities are not shown in this table but are discussed in this chapter and greatly enhance the public recreational amenities throughout the community.

Figure PR-15, Park Facility Standards

GENERAL POLICIES

- ❑ Strive for innovation in all areas, to provide unique and special facilities and programs for the community.
- ❑ Ensure that a well-balanced maintenance program is established for all Town recreational facilities.
- ❑ Ensure that recreational facilities and programs are easily accessible by the Blacksburg Transit system, sidewalks, bike lanes, and other pedestrian links.
- ❑ Coordinate planning for parks and recreation facilities with those of Virginia Tech, Montgomery County, the Montgomery County School System, and private organizations.
- ❑ Seek a variety of funding options for park facilities and recreation programs.
- ❑ Utilize Capital Improvement Program (CIP) land banking funds to purchase land for local parks, and partner with Montgomery County for the acquisition and development of land for regional and district parks.
- ❑ Support fine arts in the community.
- ❑ Sponsor special events, athletic tournaments, and other exhibitions.

ACTION STRATEGIES

in general

- Provide recreational programs and activities, operational hours, and rates that serve a wide variety of citizens.
- Identify and promote revenue-generating activities, programs, and facilities to help offset costs associated with providing excellent public recreation.
- Employ highly trained staff that meet all relevant safety, educational, and other professional criteria to fill positions.
- Periodically administer a citizen preference survey and a recreational facility user survey to help determine facility and program deficiencies and future community needs.
- Utilize County school facilities for public recreational programs and as neighborhood or community parks.

within 5 years

- Create a comprehensive Parks Master Plan to guide the acquisition and development of park facilities and recreational programs.
- Acquire the Bennett-Wong property to serve as a neighborhood park for the surrounding area, and due to its greenway and historic preservation value.
- Partner with Montgomery County, or other interested public/private parties, to develop the area's two regional parks (i.e., the Ellett Valley Park and Heritage Park & Natural Area).
- In partnership with Montgomery County, or other parties, acquire one district park for the primary purpose of serving the region's active recreational needs (*Figure PR 12*).
- Utilize portions of the former middle school property for recreational programming such as the gymnasium, classrooms for dedicated arts and crafts programs, and the annex building (e.g., an indoor skate park, seniors programs, etc.).
- Seek a formal agreement with Virginia Tech for the use of some university recreational amenities by the general public, such as tennis courts and some athletic fields, similar to the use of the university library system by the public.
- Install local directional signs to all public park facilities townwide.
- Connect the town to the national forest with a trail from the Heritage Park & Natural Area.
- Improve public access to and awareness of the Ellett Valley Park and develop a master site plan for the facility.
- Provide a weekly outdoor lunchtime entertainment series downtown, in partnership with Downtown Merchants, from late spring through early fall.
- Develop a nature center in conformance with the town's Parks Master Plan.
- Design and complete the future phases of the Aquatic Center to include aerobics and weight rooms, and other needs as identified in the town's Parks Master Plan.

within 25 years

- Acquire and develop a neighborhood and community park in the North End sector, preferably in conjunction with an elementary school.
- Require a mini-park with every new neighborhood.
- Develop the Bennett neighborhood park.
- Acquire and develop neighborhood parks for the Northwest, Southwest, Midtown North, and Midtown South sectors (*Figure PR-14*).
- Light athletic fields with state-of-the art, shaded fixtures to expand the playable hours, particularly for adult sports.
- Working with Montgomery County or other interested parties, co-develop a district park for the area's active recreational needs.
- Convert the Armory into a recreation facility for programs and community entertainment.
- Pursue a public/private or public/public partnership to acquire plan, design, and develop a first class 18-hole municipal golf course that serves the needs of the town and the region.
- Study the feasibility of The Hill Golf Course remaining a nine-hole course or converting to another use, if the existing municipal course is relocated and expanded to 18-holes.
- Study the feasibility of developing outdoor recreational amenities such as camping and hiking facilities, and equestrian and mountain bike trails in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service.
- Promote and encourage the location of a professional minor league baseball team, preferably an Appalachian League Rookie team, within the town and work closely with Virginia Tech to utilize English Field for this purpose.
- Develop innovative children's programs such as the creation of a hands-on learning museum or a small animal zoo.
- Develop history-based programs through identifying and preserving historic sites, and consider the development of a historic park such as a colonial village, perhaps in cooperation with Virginia Tech.

beyond 25 years

- Expand, redevelop, develop, or acquire parks in the Midtown South, Northwest, Southwest, and South End sectors to serve as community parks as defined in this Comprehensive Plan (*Figure PR-13*).
- Acquire through the development process, or in conjunction with the Montgomery County School System, a neighborhood park for the South End, Southwest, North End, and Downtown sectors, and two for the Northwest sector (*Figure PR-14*).
- Plan, design, and develop a second community center that would include a gymnasium, community space, indoor playground, and zero depth recreation pool among other innovative and needed community amenities.
- Plan, design, and develop an indoor sports complex that would serve the needs of the community and the region. Possible joint public/private partnership.